

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Statistics

Risk Factors for Prostate Cancer

- **Age:** Prostate cancer is found most often in men older than 50; over 80% of prostate cancer cases are diagnosed in men over 65 years of age.
- **African Ancestry:** Black men are affected disproportionately by prostate cancer. The diagnosis of prostate cancer among black men in Michigan is 1.6 times that of white men and they are diagnosed with prostate cancer at an earlier age; the death rate is 2.0 times that of white men.
- **History of prostate cancer** in close family member(s).

Causes of Prostate Cancer ... **Unknown at This Time**

Symptoms of Prostate Cancer

No symptoms: today early prostate cancer is most often found with a blood test, the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA), before the cancer has caused any symptoms.

The following problems *may* be symptoms of prostate cancer or could also be caused by infections, or prostate enlargement and should be evaluated by a physician.

- Difficulty starting to urinate
- Less force to the urine stream or dribbling after finishing urinating
- Frequent urination
- Blood or pus in the urine
- Pain or burning feeling while urinating
- Pain with ejaculation
- Hip or back pain that does not go away

Diagnosing Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is diagnosed by a biopsy (tissue sample) of the prostate in a man with an abnormal PSA test or rectal exam or with symptoms that may indicate prostate cancer. The PSA test may be used as a yearly screening tool in men over 50 or at an earlier age in men with risk factors. The American Cancer Society and the American Urological Association recommend screening; the US Preventive Services Task Force, the CDC, and the MDCH do not recommend screening. All of these organizations strongly endorse individualized counseling about the benefits and risks of testing for prostate cancer.

- Prostate cancer has been the most frequently diagnosed (other than skin cancers) cancer in Michigan since 1991.
- In 2001, Michigan had the third highest incidence of prostate cancer in the nation; 8,662 Michigan men were diagnosed with prostate cancer that year.
- Prostate cancer was the second leading cause of cancer deaths among Michigan men during 2002 when 1,015 men in the state died of the disease.
- African American men in Michigan have the highest incidence of prostate cancer, more than one and a half times that of the general population. They are twice as likely as white men to die of the disease.
- Nationally, of the 9.8 million cancer survivors in 2001, the 2nd largest group was prostate cancer survivors, 17% of the total.

RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Prostate Cancer Control Initiative
www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/prostate.htm
- National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov/cancer_information/cancer_type/prostate
- American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org
- American Foundation for Urologic Disease
www.afud.org
- American foundation for Urologic Disease Prostate Health Council
www.prostatehealth.com
- Center for Prostate Research
www.cpdr.org
- National Prostate Cancer Coalition
www.pcacoalition.org

Treatment Options for Prostate Cancer

- Radical prostatectomy (removal of the prostate by surgery)
- Radiation therapy—external “beam” and internal “seed” radiation (Brachytherapy)
- Hormone therapy which may include orchiectomy (surgical removal of the testicles) and estrogen therapy
- Watchful waiting (monitoring with examinations and diagnostic tests, no active treatment)
- Chemotherapy (limited to advanced prostate cancer)

How is Prostate Cancer Different from other Cancers?

Prostate cancer can be aggressive, growing quickly, and spreading to other parts of the body, eventually causing death if not treated. Or it may be slow growing and stay in the prostate where it causes few if any problems and does not affect the individual's lifespan. Sometimes it is obvious from test results that the cancer is aggressive; however, in many cases it is not clear. **Three out of four cases of prostate cancer are of the slow growing type that would never have caused problems.** Therefore, each man must decide whether or not to get tested for prostate cancer, and if it is found, which treatment option to select based on the risks and benefits as informed by his values and preferences

Side Effects of Prostate Cancer Treatment

- Permanent: Impotence in 45-60%, urinary incontinence or other urinary problems 2-9%, diarrhea and/or rectal bleeding 8-10% with radiation. Treatments for these problems continue to be developed.
- A larger number have these problems for about three months after treatment.

Informed and Shared Decision Making

The following elements are critical to facilitate a man's decision on prostate cancer screening or treatment.

- Balanced information on prostate cancer: for more detailed information see references at the end of this page; talking with men who have gone through the process is also important.
- Advanced age, life expectancy of less than 10 years, or serious medical conditions could be reasons to forego screening and/or treatment.
- The individual's preferences and values regarding cancer, uncertainty, living with impotence or other side effects and other associated issues.
- Clarity on the level of participation in decision-making the man chooses.
- Physician who will answer questions, provide balanced sources of information, and give his or her recommendation but ultimately respect the man's wishes for screening or treatment.
- For more detailed information, visit the “Resources” and “Prostate Cancer Screening and Treatment Decision Aids” sections.

PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING AND TREATMENT DECISION AIDS

- Michigan Cancer Consortium Decision Aid for treatment of early prostate cancer: *Making the Choice: Deciding What to Do About Early Stage Prostate Cancer* is available in booklet, audio, and Web-based formats. The booklet and audio formats can be ordered at no charge by phoning 800-249-0314 or by visiting www.prostatecancerdecision.org. On the Web site, the booklet and audio formats can be downloaded and the Web-based format can be viewed.
- CDC Decision Aids for prostate cancer screening can be ordered at no charge or the PDF can be downloaded: *Prostate Cancer Screening, A Decision Guide* at <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/decisionguide/index.htm> and *Prostate Cancer Screening, A Decision Guide for African Americans* at <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/aadecisionguide/index.htm>

